ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSUKE

[0080]

Methods and apparatus are taught for controlling the operation of a power train in a motor vehicle (1), which may include controlling a clutch actuating mechanism (20) so as to open a clutch (3) in a vehicle pull mode. Then, a transmission (4) may be changed from a first gear position to a second gear position via a neutral position by moving a transmission actuator. At or about the same time, the ignition angle of a spark-ignited combustion engine (2) is preferably shifted during the gear change step to cause the combustion engine to generate a negative engine torque. As a result, engine speed is decreased when the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and a desired engine torque can be rapidly realized as soon as the transmission actuator is disposed in the second gear position. Thereafter, the clutch is closed again.